



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Allotment Strategy
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	Monday 3 rd September 2007
Key Decision:	YES
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Directorate:	Customer and Service Delivery
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Trini Crake
Ward(s)	Boughton Green, Kingsthorpe

1. Purpose

A strategy that will take us forward in allotment provision over the next 5 years, although this will be a live document and will evolve through the next five years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopt the Allotment Strategy at appendix A in principle.
- 2.2 That any of the recommendations within the strategy with financial implications are not implemented but considered as part of the medium term planning.

3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 The Allotment Strategy was drawn up as a result of an Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Group and represents essentially Northampton Borough Council's first strategy for allotments across the borough.
- 3.2 The strategy examines the current options available for supporting and strengthening allotments in the borough taking into account current demand, the existing provision and looking at proposals to upgrade existing facilities and capacity.
- 3.3 The allotments represent an opportunity to engage with communities across the Borough and offer people the chance to participate in a healthier lifestyle. The proposed strategy does focus on upgrading facilities but recognises that the additional funding cannot be easily met by NBC. It therefore recommends that a partnership approach would be required from all involved including allotment holders, specialists and NBC officers by forming a steering group. This group would be required to oversee the implementation of the strategy and develop a five-year action plan for upgrading the existing allotments and identify new and additional sources of external funding.
- 3.5 Cabinet can adopt this policy in principle and allow further evaluation of the financial implications as part of the medium term plan. The proposed Steering Group would also be able to identify alternative sources of funding to support the options for upgrading and enhancing existing facilities.
- 3.6 NBC would continue to own the sites and be responsible for letting arrangements and its statutory responsibilities.

4. Implications (including Financial Implications)

4.1 Policy

If Cabinet adopts the Allotment Strategy it will be putting in place a new approach to the policy towards the operation and provision of our allotments. Key to this will be the new partnership approach wider than simply NBC to provide and develop existing and new allotments. It would represent changes in the growth agenda. In addition the strategy would introduce guides for good allotment practice that would be issued to all allotment holders.

4.2 Resources and Risk

The main financial risk is the proposal to introduce concessions for allotment holders phased over a 3-year period.

Year 1 = 10% reduction = £728.96 reduction in Year 1 rent income.

Year 2 = 20% reduction

Year 3 = 20% reduction

Current annual rented income is £37,000 approximately.

The result is that certain prescribed groups, over 60's and disabled, will by year 3 pay 50% of the annual charge.

As part of the partnership approach, NBC will also be expected to invest capital into the allotments, as they neglected for a number of years. Opportunities, NBC will rationalise all of the current sites, which in turn will allow land to be made available for alternate use or for sale, this could represent a large capital receipt for NBC.

4.3 Legal

None specifically arising from the report.

4.4 Equality

By changing the amount payable by certain groups, and improving disabled access to sites as appropriate the Strategy aims at improving equality of access to services.

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4.6 Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal: Streetcare & Environment Manager, Task & Finish Group

External: Northampton Allotment Network

4.6 How Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

Clearly supports the Cleaner, Greener Safer agenda and the proposal focuses on increased partnership working to facilitate delivery of any enhanced facilities.

4.7 Other Implications

Nothing specific arising from this report.

5. Background Papers

Northampton Borough Council Allotment Strategy, April 2007.

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